

**CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY BOARD
CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE – 8th Floor Conference Room
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA 33301
September 22, 2014 – 6:30 PM**

				Cumulative Attendance 1/2014 through 12/2014	
MEMBERS	APPT BY	ATTENDANCE	PRESENT	ABSENT	
1. Vacant, Chair	-	-	-	-	
2. Alena Alberani, Vice Chair	II	P	5	4	
3. Daniel Ayers	M	A	8	1	
4. Steven Cook	I	P	8	1	
5. Vicki Eckels	IV	P	7	1	
6. William Goetz	I	P	5	0	
7. Vacant	IV	-	-	-	
8. Jim Moyer	III	P	9	0	
9. Mate Thitisawat	C	P	6	3	
10. Cheryl Whitfield	III	P	9	0	
11. Jim Wood	II	P	4	2	

Also Present

Sustainability Division of Public Works

Todd Hiteshew, Environmental Services Manager, Public Works – Sustainability Division

Mary Ann Johnston, Administrative Aide, Public Works – Sustainability Division

Tyler Whitmire, Senior Management Fellow, Public Works – Sustainability Division

Call of Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Acting Chair Alberani at 6:33 pm, roll was called, and it was determined a quorum was present.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Minor corrections to the August 25, 2014 meeting minutes were requested and Acting Chair Alberani asked for a motion to approve the minutes of this meeting.

- o **Motion** made Dr. Goetz and seconded by Ms. Eckels to approve these minutes. In a voice vote, the Board passed the motion unanimously.

New Business

Nominations for SAB Chair – Dr. Goetz nominated Acting Chair Alberani to the position of Chair for the SAB. Ms. Eckels seconded it and it was unanimously approved by the Board.

Nominations for the SAB Vice Chair – Ms. Eckels was nominated to the position of Vice Chair of the SAB by Dr. Goetz and Chair Alberani seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved by the Board.

Staff Liaison Report

Mr. Hiteshew provided highlights of the following announcement/events:

- Communication – GMO – still in progress and will let you know when it will be forwarded to Commission.
- Green Construction Code event – held last week in conjunction with ICLEI. Mr. Hernandez from DSD presented at this event.
- Coastal Cleanup – last Saturday Sept. 20th –60 volunteers at the site that the City staff ran.
- Oct. 14th – Ordinance revisions for Florida Friendly landscaping – 5:00-6:30pm – 1st Floor Chambers.
- SE Florida Regional Climate Summit – Oct 1-2, Miami Beach.

Presentations

Food Forest:

- Miguel Afonso, Valerie Amor and Michael Madfis presented.
- Mr. Afonso suggested a decentralized model for Food Forest to bring food into the cities and have them wherever people are located. Food Forests are one method to achieve this end. A Food Forest is a forest of fruits, nuts, perennial vegetables, and annual vegetables (with beneficial insects). There are several layers within this area – herbaceous layer, small trees, going into larger trees, palm layer and vining layer. All can be food plants.
- We used to have 15 staple crops and now we are down to 5 staple crops. The crops in a Food Forest sustain themselves. Once this Food Forest is established it will last for generations. It doesn't need to occupy a large space.
- Some of the benefits of a Food Forest include: increase the soil biomass (carbon sequestration), large plant mass (canopy), greater soil water capacity, and a greater incentive to not use chemicals since you're growing food. A Food Forest would require less inputs and maintenance over time (pathways and borders).
- Esthetics – We need more shade in an urban environment and a Food Forest would show what people can do in their gardens. An opportunity for ecotourism could potentially result from the development of a Food Forest. A tropical location such as South Florida can grow a wider variety of food than a place such as Seattle which does have Food Forests.
- Ms. Amor's presentation was on an edible Food Forest. On September 19th, she participated in Park(ing) Day Fort Lauderdale 2014. She had a pamphlet to show how we could have a Food Forest in Fort Lauderdale. There are obvious environmental and socio-economic benefits to having a Food Forest.
- She discussed the Oct. 14 Landscape Ordinance Workshop and how we could do more about this issue. Broward County will be redoing their land use plan and

looking at SAB's agriculture recommendations that were worked on earlier this year. This land use plan examination will go on for about 1.5 years and citizens have an opportunity to participate.

- On Oct. 25 Ms. Amor will be meeting with the City's Neighborhood Support contact person (Mr. Hruschka) to discuss Food Forests. He's very interested in this idea.
- Michael Madfis – He is very knowledgeable about maintaining a landscape without pesticides.
- He agreed with Mr. Afonso about not spraying Food Forests with pesticides. He discussed how sabal palms assisted bees with their nectar.
- He suggested that a microstep be used to start something in the City such as Flagler Village where we would do a pilot site to see if it would be successful in spreading out into different areas within the City. We could educate people with such a microstep.
- Mr. Wood – Asked who would organize and manage such a Food Forest. Mr. Madfis suggested planting things in borders that are easily accessible to people. Perhaps you would have a City farmer to maintain an area. Perhaps you would encourage recent immigrants to maintain the forests since they're familiar with non-pesticide farming. You could create activities for the whole community and encourage them to maintain the site (i.e., afterschool kids encouraged to maintain the site).
- Dr. Goetz asked if the City arborist had been approached and Mr. Madfis said that they talked about something about a year ago. He suggested that you start a small site like Flagler Village that is close to a lot of people and they are more likely to use the food.
- Mr. Madfis suggested that an RFP be developed but the Board realized you would need an economic aspect. They've put together proposals for converting landscaping to edible landscaping in the past.
- Ms. Eckels asked that someone put together a nice communication that we can put forward to the City. Chair Alberani suggests that if we tie it together with the Oct. 14 Landscape workshop, that would go over better with the Commission.
- Mr. Moyer asks if watering was reduced, what would happen to the plants. Mr. Madfis responded that if you encourage root growth, the soil holds water better and you reduce the amount you have to give plants since you are providing shade, etc.
- The Board will need some backup literature from the presenters so that they better understand and present the concept to Commission.
- Mr. Moyer asked about putting food forests in schools? They have lots of area to grow things and this would encourage kids to grow food and take it home to their families.

Presentation by SAB Members

Proposed Communication – Geoengineering Resolution

- Ms. Whitfield offered to postpone her presentation of the proposed communication until next meeting due to time constraints.

Old Business

FPL Community Solar

- Mr. Antheil, Director of Advocacy for the Florida Solar Energy Industries Association presented.
- He did not feel that the FPL proposal was a true community solar program. Neighbors should decide where to build a solar facility and receive the benefit of the array or get credit on their bills by putting energy back into the grid. He discussed large solar farms that exist in Midwest and how they benefit the advance of solar as a viable industry. He was against solar arrays controlled by a power provider when they are at the cost of the rate payers or when they prevent community members from having their own community solar system. He commended FPL for making the effort with their program but it doesn't make real progress for community solar. It's more of a way to make them look good.
- Mr. Antheil spoke on FEECA (Florida Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act). He felt that individual residents should be able to finance a \$5000-10,000 solar array at their home. He also felt that net metering would be under attack here in Florida.
- He noted that Orlando created the first community solar array and every rate payer now has a fixed electricity bill for the next 20 years. Orlando has its own utility company.
- Ms. Eckels needed the direct tie-in that people in the community are receiving the benefit from FPL's proposal.
- Chair Alberani would like something that they could present to the board that discussed both the FPL contract and what could be done within the City. Maybe we could get something in the middle between what FPL is offering and what we can do here.
- A discussion was held about sending a communication to Commission about the FPL proposal. Dr. Goetz requested that the Board asks staff to hold off on approving a contract until they can prepare a Communication to Commission.
 - **Motion** made by Dr. Goetz to recommend that we send a communication that the City ceases negotiations with FPL for the Community Solar Array. Ms. Eckels seconded the motion.
- Ms. Eckels felt that the City was sanctioning the 'scam' to its citizens who wouldn't benefit at all from it by paying \$9.00/month to FPL on their bill.
- Mr. Antheil felt that if you removed incentives from all fuels/energies, solar was just as inexpensive as other fuels. Technology based energies have prices that will go down while commodity energies prices will go up.
- Mr. Hiteshew recommended the Board communicate to Dr. Gassman what has happened today when she gets back from her conference. He suggested wording

for a communication to Commission: "The SAB heard from FPL at their August meeting and heard from the Advocacy for the Florida Solar Energy Industries Association at their September meeting and we would like to thoroughly vet the program at our October meeting and request that Commission not to enter into any binding agreements until such vetting".

- **Motion** made by Ms. Eckels that we use Mr. Hiteshew's suggested wording for the communication. Seconded by Mr. Wood.
- Mr. Hiteshew noted that the soonest we could get this communication to Commission would be at the Oct. 21st meeting. The next SAB meeting is Oct. 27th.
- Dr. Goetz withdrew his original motion. Ms. Eckels withdrew her motion as well.
- Dr. Goetz proposed a new communication: "Whereas the Sustainability Advisory Board has had presentations from FPL and Florida Solar Energy Industries Association and whereas based on these presentations, the SAB believes the project warrants further consideration by the SAB. Be it resolved that the SAB recommends that the City not proceed with any binding agreements with FPL on the solar energy initiative pending further consideration and recommendations by the SAB".
 - **Motion** made by Dr. Goetz to accept the language above for the communication to Commission. Seconded by Ms. Eckels. The Board passed this motion unanimously.

New Business/Discussion

- Election of Chair and Vice Chair (see above)

Board Communications

- See above for Community Solar.
- Ms. Eckels suggested someone put together a communication for Food Forests pending backup materials from today's presenters.

Public Comment

- None

Committee Comments:

Chair Alberani – Asked everyone to look at Amendment #1 in the upcoming election regarding protecting Florida's waters and natural areas. This would divert some funding toward clean water, Everglades restoration, etc.

Mr. Moyer – Agreed with the suggestion about public schools and Food Forests. He recommended that we have someone from Broward Schools at one of our meeting to listen to a presentation those given at today's meeting.

Mr. Thitisawat – Asked about reaching out to universities to do a Food Forest on campus. He could talk to Mr. Abbate at FAU.

Mr. Cook – Suggested that we invite Echo City Partners (PACE program) for a presentation.

Mr. Wood – Wanted to have the discussion about Geoengineering and was interested in the FPL pilot program.

Dr. Goetz – Asked people to give comments on the hybrid electrical vehicles.

No Comment:

- Ms. Eckels
- Ms. Whitfield

Items for Next Meeting:

- Mr. Hiteshew asked the Board to specify the topics or presentations to include for the upcoming agenda.

Potential Presentation(s) for next meeting

1. Geoengineering Resolution – postponed from today's meeting.
2. Goetz – Hybrid electrical vehicles.
3. Old Business – FPL Community Solar – further discussion – no presenters. Would like any staff involved in this to participate at this meeting so SAB can discuss with them the timeline, and where the City of Fort Lauderdale is in the process.

Potential Presentation for Future Meeting

- Echo City Partners (PACE program) – Mr. Cook
- Clothing recycling – Mr. Moyer

Adjournment

With no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting adjourned at 8:47 pm.

Next meeting date: October 27, 2014 – 8th Floor Conference Room, City Hall [Minutes prepared by Mary Ann Johnston]